

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Justin Lingard on 3/29/2012.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1, 3, 5.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. (Currently Amended) A control method for a fuel cell comprising an oxidizing gas supplying unit configured to supply an oxidizing gas to a cathode via an oxidizing gas supply line of the fuel cell, and a hydrogen supplying unit configured to supply hydrogen to an anode via a hydrogen supply line of the fuel cell, the anode having a buildup of impurities over time causing a presence of residual gas, the method comprising:

detecting a cathode-side gas pressure within at least one of the oxidizing gas supply line and the cathode with a pressure detecting device;

dynamically calculating a target hydrogen partial pressure regarding a hydrogen pressure among a gas mixture in the anode, the dynamic calculation being based on the detected cathode-side gas pressure and a required electricity generation amount;

setting a hydrogen supply pressure of hydrogen to be supplied to the fuel cell to a value that is calculated based on a value that is obtained by adding the calculated target hydrogen partial pressure to the detected cathode-side gas pressure; and

controlling a hydrogen supply control device to regulate the supply of hydrogen from the hydrogen supplying unit to the fuel cell at the set hydrogen supply pressure.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art is Iio (US 2003/0027024) and Yamanashi (US 6632552).

Iio modified by Yamanashi does not disclose nor suggest "setting a hydrogen supply pressure of hydrogen to be supplied to the fuel cell to a value that is calculated based on a value that is obtained by adding the calculated target hydrogen partial pressure to the detected cathode-side gas pressure" as claimed in claim 6.

Ito modified by Yamanashi teaches “setting a hydrogen supply pressure of hydrogen to be supplied to the fuel cell to a value that is calculated based on the detected cathode-side gas pressure”.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CYNTHIA LEE whose telephone number is (571)272-8699. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick J. Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Cynthia Lee/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1726